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ABSTRACT

A Resource Group on Continuing Education and Community Service was organized to study continuing education service programs in Connecticut and make recommendations regarding them to the state Commission for Higher Education. Examination of existing programs revealed a substantial rise in the number of citizens taking advantage of these programs; the absence of well defined programs in many of the state's institutions; the absence of appropriate and systematic program coordination between institutions; the need for cooperation among institutions of higher education and other public and private sources of programs in order to make information available and access easier; the difficulties encountered by those who would enroll in such programs and their need for services that would enable them to gain the most from study in the time allowable; and the need for greater practical recognition for faculty in these programs. The Resource Group presents specific recommendations directed at each of these conditions. (JMF)

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IN SUPPORT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

A REPORT

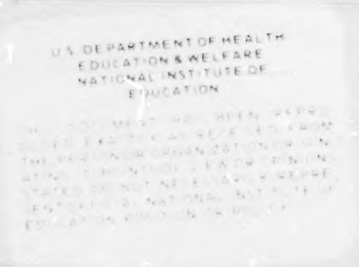
TO

THE CONNECTICUT COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

A RESOURCE GROUP ON

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE



HE 008343

This report is the work of an independent Resource Group, and not of the Commission staff. The recommendations do not necessarily represent the position of the Commission.

JULY 1975

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

TRINITY COLLEGE
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

July 14, 1975

Mr. Donald H. McGannon, Chairman
Conn. Commission for Higher Education
P. O. Box 1320
Hartford, Connecticut 06101

Dear Mr. McGannon:

I am submitting to you the final report of the Resource Group which has been working for the Commission for Higher Education on the subject of continuing education and community services in the State of Connecticut.

I hope that you, the other members of the Commission, and the staff will find the report and its recommendations useful.

I should like to thank you for the group and for the opportunity which you have given us to work together. We enjoyed it, and we believe that the recommendations which we have made, if implemented, will more closely coordinate the services of Connecticut's institutions of higher education and carry those services more readily to Connecticut citizens.

Of great help to us as we prepared our report were Donald M. Meyer and Frederick W. Lowe, Jr We deeply appreciate the labor and cooperation which they gave the resource group.

Finally, should you or members of the Commission have questions, or should you wish additional comment, please let me know: members of the Resource Group have expressed willingness to serve beyond this point in any way which will increase understanding of their work or lead to its implementation.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Smith
Vice President

TAS/msk

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JULY 1975

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Resource Group on Continuing Education and Community Service was requested to study these activities and to make recommendations concerning them to the Commission for Higher Education. The following report is the strong consensual result of a number of informed discussions among the Resource Group--persons with experience and knowledge of Connecticut's citizenry and their needs for education and training and persons with experience in and knowledge of the various kinds of public and independent universities and colleges and the other kinds of agencies which serve Connecticut residents who seek education and training.

Once the Resource Group had come to what it considered to be a satisfactory working definition of the terms "Continuing Education and Community Service"--not a simple task because of the current mobility of students--its discussions centered on these conditions:

1. The substantial numbers of Connecticut citizens who pursue learning on an occasional basis, for the sake of its utility and/or as a source of improvement, and the recent dramatic growth in the numbers of such people who, for various reasons, have not chosen or have not been able to enroll in traditional programs leading to the traditional degrees and certificates, and who have, instead, found their ways to part-time and intermittent learning opportunities;

2. The absence of well-defined programs of continuing education and community service in many of the state's institutions;
3. The absence of appropriate and systematic program coordination between institutions; or, in several cases, beyond the membership of a consortium;
4. The need for cooperation, not only among institutions of higher and postsecondary education, but also among the many other public and private sources of continuing education and community service programs in order to make information available and access easier;
5. The difficulties encountered by those who would enroll in continuing education and community service programs and their need for services which would enable them to gain the most from study in the time which they can devote to it;
6. The need for greater practical recognition, in terms of status, for faculty who teach students in continuing education and community service programs.

Those citizens who enroll in continuing education and in community service programs in Connecticut need more attention. They differ in very few ways from those who enter traditional programs immediately after secondary school, or after taking certificates or degrees; hence they merit the same consideration and service. Further, because the lines between traditional and continuing education/community service programs become more indefinite as the mobility of those who learn increases, it is imperative that the system meet the learners where they are and offer not only <u>flexibility</u> but also <u>quality</u> of opportunity.

II. GROWING CLIENTELE

The Master Plan for Higher Education in Connecticut, published in January, 1974, by the Commission for Higher Education, includes several recommendations pertaining to continuing education and community service. These recommendations recognize the growing importance of higher education services beyond the traditional programs designed for recent high school or college graduates who wish to pursue a sequential program leading to a degree. The Master Plan recommendations address themselves to:

1. The problem of finding out what communities want and what potential new students need in the way of postsecondary education;
2. The necessity of making information about continuing education programs available to the public;
3. The desire on the part of such students for academic credit for their studies;
4. The desirability of equalizing financial burdens and benefits between the so-called "regular" students and those students enrolled part-time or evenings, in extension, continuing education or community service programs; and
5. The goal of organizing higher education services for the general public into regional groupings of institutions for purposes of coordination, communication and counseling.

Enrollment data published by the Commission for Higher Education for the fall semester of 1974 show that citizen interest in a form of collegiate education other than the regular, full-time, daytime, residential degree programs is rising even faster than anticipated. While total enrollment in all colleges and universities in the State increased by 7.7 percent in fall, 1974, over fall, 1973, "this increase in total enrollment resulted almost entirely from an increase in the number of part-time students."[1] Full-time undergraduates increased by only 1.4 percent, while part-time undergraduates increased 29.8 percent, including a part-time enrollment increase in the Regional Community Colleges of 33 percent. The community colleges enrolled 50 percent more part-time students than full-time students. (Nationwide, part-time undergraduate enrollment exceeded full-time enrollment this year for the first time.)

The enrollment figures for Connecticut include only those students registered for credit courses, ignoring all those citizens who participated in other courses in collegiate and nonacademic institutions, and for whom statistics are not collected. An idea of the volume of citizen demand for similar educational services can be seen from enrollments in the adult education programs sponsored by the State Department of Education. This year approximately 120,000 adults are enrolled in Connecticut public school programs in about 5500 different classes in 80 different communities.

Private business is also very active in continuing education. For example, the Hartford Group, one of Connecticut's major insurance

(1) *Higher Education Annual Enrollment Survey 1974*, CHE, Hartford, February, 1975, p. i.

companies, this year trained approximately 1700 different employees in part-time, credit and non-credit, instruction at the home office, in addition to spending $650,000 nationwide in reimbursement of employees who complete college courses in areas appropriate to their employment. Between what business and industry is doing and what it is purchasing from the colleges lies an area of educational need being served by neither. College continuing education departments can expand their offerings to help close this gap.

Who are these students in part-time, non-credit, adult education courses; who are these participants in lifelong learning? They are mostly adults, with primary responsibilities in society other than pursuing education. They are workers and professionals who need retraining, refreshing and upgrading for their careers; individuals who seek special training for certification and licensure in a multitude of occupations; members of minority groups who for the first time have been encouraged in significant numbers to pursue opportunities offered through corporate and industrial programs and through higher education; women who wish to resume an interrupted education or improve the quality of their lives in cultural or recreational courses; citizens seeking solutions to community problems through education and elder citizens learning new skills and seeking personal development. They are the full range of Connecticut's people, requiring a full range of educational services which take up where formal programs have left off, and, in increasing numbers they are responding to opportunities to learn to lead more productive and fuller lives. All of them need educational programs and services provided at times and places convenient to them. Often,

their needs are served best by methods different from those appropriate to the full-time student.

Thus, citizen demand has confirmed the appropriateness of the concern expressed in 1973 by the Commission for Higher Education. Now Connecticut's institutions of postsecondary education, faced with the prospect of declining numbers of full-time students, are redeploying their resources at different paces and with varying degrees of success to pay more attention to this new clientele and its demands. Such redeployment involves changes in organizational structure and procedures to accommodate the new kinds of students admitted to replace the declining numbers of full-time recent high school graduates. It involves strategies to make better use of facilities by scheduling educational activities at unusual times. And it involves learning to discover and to respond to the demand patterns of students who want part-time status, or who may be able to afford no other.

A number of states have been studying continuing education, community service and the part-time student, and developing coordinated systems of continuing education to serve such students.[2] A recent study in Massachusetts "argues that continuing and part-time education, while having grown in a haphazard manner, now constitutes in some respects a base for an alternative postsecondary education system geared to the adult population's needs."[3]

Potentially, the same base exists in Connecticut, but there is no

(2) See Appendix I

(3) *Strengthening the Alternative Postsecondary Education System: Continuing and Part-Time Study in Massachusetts,* University Consultants, Inc. for Massachusetts Advisory Council on Education, Boston, September, 1973, p. iii.

mechanism for coordinating the equally haphazard collection of offerings. Unless there is conscious leadership by the Commission for Higher Education for coordination, higher education institutions in the state are likely to engage in unbridled competition, which can only lead to conflict and wasteful or unneeded services as they strive to serve the bewildering variety of needs heretofore addressed only marginally. The Commission for Higher Education should encourage useful competition to secure convenient services of the highest quality, and it should establish a framework in which the public interest will be protected and institutional interests coordinated for the most efficient use of resources. It is hoped, therefore, that the Commission for Higher Education will take a strong interest in the development, coordination, support and provision of information about programs in continuing education and community service.

III. RESPONDING TO THE NEED

In recognition of the widespread interest in the subject, the Commission for Higher Education in November, 1974, formed a Resource Group on Continuing Education and Community Service, and appointed Thomas A. Smith, Vice President of Trinity College, as its chairman.

The first task which the Resource Group set for itself was an attempt to define its topic--its turf, so to speak. The difficulty of this task became immediately apparent, as it had for most other state educational establishments that had addressed the problem: what is a traditional academic offering for one institution is continuing education or community service for another.

The problem was what to include and what to exclude. Should all courses available to part-time students be included, even though they are the same courses taken by regular full-time, residential day students? Should only "Evening Division" courses be considered? Or only courses offered off-campus? Should we include both credit and non-credit courses? Should educational avtivities other than formal courses--conferences, workshops, seminars, institutes, or art exhibits, plays and museum programs--be considered? Is it possible to agree on common definitions of what one or another college may call continuing education, extension division courses, adult education, evening division courses, community service or public service activities? What about external degree

programs and correspondence courses; self-paced, auto-tutorial programs; courses on television or in the newspaper? How about courses offered as adult education by public school systems and training programs conducted by business and industry?

If all possibilities were included within the scope of the Resource Group's study, the Group would really be involved in a study of all of higher education, as well as in studies of educational and training programs offered by business and industry, public agencies, civic, political, religious, social and labor organizations. Too broad.

On the other side was the danger of too narrow a definition, which would exclude ongoing and potential educational services for which the Commission for Higher Education has a coordinating responsibility.

In the end, the Resource Group decided to guide itself by defining the client group for which such educational services are provided, thus drawing closer to what increasingly has come to be defined as Lifelong Learning. Despairing of arriving at a generic definition that would serve all groups in all kinds of contexts, the Group--in order to proceed with its task--settled for the following internal definition:

> Continuing Education and Community Service provide educational and training service to adult individuals and groups through programs and policies specifically designed to meet their special needs, primarily on a part-time basis. The programs may be for either credit or non-credit and may be offered by institutions of higher education as well as by institutions not primarily educational in purpose.

The Resource Group believes that in order to exercise its responsibility to coordinate the provision of better and more efficient services of this kind and to forestall the confusion that will result if institutions are left to their own devices, must undertake the formulation of specific

policies to guide the development and coordination of such services. It must encourage the development of a specific organization of the institutions of postsecondary education in Connecticut for the purposes of planning, providing and coordinating such programs, and for informing the public about their availability. As noted in the "Policy Statement on Community Education," adopted November 13, 1974, by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges:

> *In every program plan there should be careful consultation between all concerned parties that the educational agency best prepared to do the job should receive the assignment and treat it as a stewardship with information on progress continually shared.*
>
> *These are not just institutional arrangements. They are arrangements which have to be facilitated by the framework of public policy within which the institutions operate. Thus, policy making bodies and funding sources must become a part of the planning to be sure that such cooperative arrangements are facilitated and not frustrated.*

In order to develop policy guidelines for the planning and coordination of continuing education and community service it will be necessary for the Commission for Higher Education to develop consensus among the institutions and constituent units involved as to the kinds of services most appropriately provided by the different kinds of institutions; the procedures most appropriate for determining the needs of the citizens; the places, times and methods in which these needs can be most effectively met; and the manner in which information about such services may be most effectively collected and disseminated.

RECOMMENDATION 1: *That the Commission for Higher Education develop, in conjunction with all constituencies purveying continuing education and community service, policy guidelines suitable for application at the regional level, by means of which institutions can determine the kind of programs most appropriate to their missions and least wasteful of public and private resources for serving students in continuing education and community service programs.*

In considering the criteria on which such guidelines might be based, the Resource Group reasoned that consideration should be given, logically, to geographical location, level of institutional instruction, existing instructional competencies and resources, community social priorities and volume of need. It appeared obvious that, with some such variety of criteria, a matrix format for the guidelines might be appropriate. An existing advisory body to the Commission for Higher Education, given this new assignment, or a body newly formed for this purpose, could be useful in helping the Commission and the institutions to arrive at the consensus necessary for the establishment of policies for the coordination of continuing education and community service in the postsecondary institutions of the State.

It was clear to the Resource Group that the presently depressed economy is a factor which has caused substantial numbers of citizens to become more dependent upon continuing education opportunities. It is equally clear that even in better times, the Commission must assume a specific and responsible role in establishing policies and practices which will enable institutions to finance the requirements of this growing constituency. The Resource Group has assumed that the legislative mandate of the Commission for Higher Education includes responsibility

for the planning and coordination of continuing education and community service.

But the Resource Group has not construed the Commission's mandate to include the operation or administration of educational programs. Furthermore, continuing education and community service programs are generally local or regional in their impact, due to their nonresidential nature. Therefore, the Resource Group recommends, as the organizational means for administering policies concerned with the coordination of continuing education and community service:

RECOMMENDATION 2: *That the Commission for Higher Education encourage the further development of its regional organizations of higher education toward consortia of postsecondary education including, for the purpose of administering the planning and coordination of continuing education and community service programs within the region, all organizations providing such services within the region as wish to be included,* under the policy guidelines of the Commission for Higher Education.*

RECOMMENDATION 3: *That such regional consortia adopt bylaws or statements of agreement on methods of operation to administer Commission for Higher Education policy guidelines within the region, and submit such bylaws or statements of agreement to the Commission for Higher Education for approval.*

RECOMMENDATION 4: *That, upon such approval, the Commission for Higher Education allocate funds, under Public Act 140 or similar legislation, for pilot programs for the provision of administrative services to such regional consortia, pending regular support by General Assembly appropriations.*

* Opportunities for the educational use of regional cable television services should not be forgotten in the development of these consortia.

Elements of these recommendations are already being implemented in two regions. A Fiscal Year 1975 grant under P.A. 140 is supporting a successful Regional Counseling Center in Scutheastern Connecticut with the cooperation of the seven collegiate institutions in the area. The Higher Education Center for Urban Studies (HECUS), operating since 1968 and now composed of nine public and independent collegiate institutions in Southwestern Connecticut, has been receiving grant support during the first two years of P.A. 140 for a number of their educational programs.

A further expansion of the concept is under consideration. A recommendation for the restructuring of the existing regional organizations into consortia, funded by Public Act 140, for broad purposes of coordination, has been prepared by the Grant Program Coordinator (a CHE staff member) and is currently under discussion by the Commission staff. Thus, the Resource Group recommendations are consistent with developing planning within the Commission for Higher Education. The Resource Group hopes that any such planning will be carried on henceforth with the objectives of the Resource Group in mind.

A more detailed statement of the ideal possibilities for the full development of such a consortial arrangement, for the purposes proposed by this Resource Group, has been prepared by a subcommittee. It is seen by the Resource Group as a possible model (see Appendix A). It proposes a statewide information system, with possible dissemination through public libraries. It envisions operational coordination within each of the higher education regions and, within each region, appropriate bodies to provide information and advice on matching the needs of local individuals and groups with the objectives and services of local institutions.

Among the obligations of regional consortia, upon assuming the responsibility for implementation of a coordinated system of continuing education and community service within the region, should be the provision of timely information about all of the opportunities, including noncollegiate, for participation in continuing education and community service, made available by all means possible, including the establishment of regional referral and information centers. Such information should be provided so as to be easily available to all citizens of the region.

A pilot survey has been conducted by the Resource Group, with the cooperation of the Management Information System staff of the Commission for Higher Education, among five institutions of different type within the Hartford Capitol Region. The survey was designed to test the format in which such information might be collected, and to provide a sampling of the kinds of useful information that could be provided to the citizens of each region. Results are available at the Commission offices.

Secondly, speedy response should be provided to the needs for continuing education and community service programs expressed by communities, citizens groups, business, industry and other legitimate individuals or groups of citizens.

The award of credit for students in continuing education and community service programs should be facilitated among the membership of the regional consortia, by consortial action or through the services of the Board for State Academic Awards. Use of the nationally standardized Continuing Education Unit should be studied. The acceptance of CLEP and other standardized tests for college credit, and the credit awarded

therefrom, should be coordinated within the region.

The adult education programs sponsored by local school systems under the aegis of the State Department of Education provide opportunities for further study to a large number of part-time students. These programs are successful, economical and worthwhile. Local school systems, along with the State Department of Education, have long and significant experience in the provision of educational services to many categories of adult, part-time students. Therefore, the Resource Group recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 5: *That postsecondary programs in continuing education and community service be coordinated and articulated with adult education programs offered under the leadership of the State Board of Education by local school systems within the region.*

With such a regional organization structure developed, there would still remain individual and system-wide institutional conditions that discriminate against potential consumers of quality continuing education and community service programs, compared to students in standard degree programs. It behooves the Commission for Higher Education to seek to remove these inequities. Preliminary findings by the Resource Group indicate that, in spite of growing interest, continuing education and community service still have low priority at many institutions in terms of access and support. Programs are not offered at times and places that make them easily available to those who want to enroll. The commitment of faculty resources, financial support, financial aid and counseling is often insufficient to assure best results for those who enroll. Faculty status tends to be low, student fee scales inequitable,

and supporting services inaccessible or unavailable.

Therefore, the Resource Group recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 6: *That greater weight be placed upon faculty participation in continuing education and community service when institutional decisions about faculty status are made; and that faculty be encouraged to participate in continuing education and community service by institutional policy changes to recognize such participation by improved status.*

RECOMMENDATION 7: *That every effort be made to remove any inequities that may exist in student costs or institutional support for part-time students within the public system.*

RECOMMENDATION 8: *That the availability of student supporting services for continuing education and community service students be amplified at the institutional level according to the special needs of part-time students.*

RECOMMENDATION 9: *That the needs of Connecticut citizens for continuing education and community service programs be addressed directly by the Commission for Higher Education in its annual review and recommendation of the public service function of the State budgeting process.*

RECOMMENDATION 10: *That the Commission for Higher Education encourage the development of special training programs for professional staff in continuing education and community service programs.*

Many of these recommendations require long-term programs working toward solutions as consensus among the postsecondary education community is achieved. While such solutions could not be produced within the time available to the Resource Group on Continuing Education and Community Service, it became apparent from the Group's discussions that a series of specialized, ad hoc task forces organized to address the particular

problems brought out in each of these recommendations would be an appropriate way for the Commission for Higher Education to address itself to the problems.

IV. CONCLUSION

It would be pretentious to claim that the report and recommendations above are the result of intensive research on the part of the Resource Group. Neither time nor the voluntary nature of the members' relatively short association, during which they continued to pursue other individual responsibilities, permitted us to accomplish the task which Connecticut deserves. However, the Resource Group was comprised of rational, informed, and interested persons. Its members hope that at the very least we offer here the basis for a systematic, flexible yet durable, and economical approach to a growing class of learners whose persistence, motivation, and sacrifice deserve greater assistance and recognition than have been accorded them in the past.

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APPENDIX

Connecticut Educational Referral & Information Network:

A Concept for Regional Public Service and Educational Planning

Prepared for the Connecticut Higher Education Master Plan
Resource Group on Continuing Education and Community Service

by

F. J. McLean

May 22, 1975

Governmental decentralization, whether it takes place at the federal, state, or local levels, is usually a mixed blessing. Nevertheless, interest in regionalization runs high. There are, as we know, literally dozens of state and federal agencies, each one of which has come to a conclusion about how a community ought to be divided up--all, of course, along different lines. There being no intermediate level of government in Connecticut between the 169 towns and the state, the vacuum created at the regional level attracts many service delivery as well as planning functions under state and/or federal auspices, from snowplowing to environmental control.

Another important consideration is the extent or the degree to which the entity in question is a creation of the region and a reflection of its needs and priorities versus a creation of a sponsoring agency for the delivery of its particular product; the mix varies from agency to agency and by the methods chosen to fund and staff the regional organization.

There is always a division of labor and responsibility to be made between the regional and state, or federal, entity.

It is unlikely that regionalization per se will be effective. Just as changes in rituals do not effectively change institutions and the individuals of which they consist, similarly, changes in lines on a map are not likely to change the dynamics of the relationships between a region and the state of which it has just been made a new and different part.

Regionalization is not new to Connecticut or to many other fields outside of higher education. There are numerous examples of regional

organizations or institutions of one sort or another which have been proposed, some of which have been tried, and several of which are organized and operating on a regional basis: e.g., college consortia, Bridgeport Regional Organization, regional planning districts, higher education planning areas, regional university, regional community college, regional technical schools, counseling centers. Most of these have consisted of providers of educational programs and services.

This relatively one-sided organizational style has left no room for a standing and continuous relationship with the individuals of the region or with local institutional and organizational needs.

Therefore, it is suggested that the regional center organize functionally, and perhaps structurally, in a tripartite manner in order to attend to intra-regional or extra-regional concerns:

A. Local Individual Needs and Services. This function is held accountable by the state agency and the region for identifying needs of individuals in the region for educational planning purposes and for providing the general public and educational institutions informational and referral services. The Local Individual Needs and Services component would include people who are knowledgeable of and who are advocates for the educational and informational requirements of individuals.

B. Local Organizational and Institutional Needs Services. This component of the regional organization is identified with the place--specific needs of the region having particularly to do with manpower training requirements, especially those of a local character. It is responsible for taking steps to see

that the needs are appropriately communicated and met.

C. Local Educational Programs, Needs and Services. This component is seen as including providers in the region of all educational programs. These would include the vocational and adult education programs of the State Department of Education, and those programs offered by proprietary and hospital schools, as well as those provided by professional groups and employers.

Information and referral capabilities depend for their usefulness on up-to-date information and accessibility. It is proposed that there be established the Connecticut Education Referral and Information Network, which would enter into agreements with regional centers to provide access to central data bank information; in return, the regional centers would agree to supply to the central data bank regional information which had been agreed to statewide.

In view of a) the central role played by the network and by the regional centers as a resource for the individuals, organizations and educational providers of the region; b) the need for rapid, continuous and effective communications; c) the tradition and practice of public service which has characterized the library community; d) the role of these institutions in providing educational services not only to the young, but to those of all ages, backgrounds and persuasions; and e) the need to lay the groundwork for implementing the Carnegie Commission recommendations for libraries to provide educational, multi-service centers for the independent learner, it is recommended that the regional groups and the state network be housed in and administered by designated libraries.

It is assumed that the Educational Program and Services function could be carried out and supported through existing planning regions as defined by the Commission for Higher Education and the State Board of Education for postsecondary education and for those basic educational services needed by adults to select, obtain admission to, and complete a program of studies to reach their educational objectives.

With regard to Local Institutional and Organizational Needs and Services, it is assumed that this function can be readily identified with state regional planning areas which have been in operation for some time and with retail and labor market areas, with the implication that ecomonic health and development of the region is a significant consideration.

With regard to Local Individual Needs and Services, it is assumed that organizations such as counseling, career guidance, college placement, financial aid, and a variety of other interests related to individual and family decision-making regarding educational goals and alternatives can be identified in the region as a constituency for this function and would be mandated to conduct periodic assessments of the interests and intentions of the young and adults in further education as an aid to regional and state planning. Adults seeking counseling will be referred to agencies which specialize in the types of services sought.

Funding could be by contract between State Library and the Commission for Higher Education and the State Board of Education, to supply services to the regional groups making up the state network.

It is suggested that the Resource Group on Community Service and Continuing Education appoint a steering committee consisting of representatives from the group, the State Department of Education, Connecticut

Business and Industry Association, and other appropriate parties at interest to oversee the initial development and establishment of governance and funding.